

## THE ROOTS OF CAPITAL REPERTORY COMPANY

*Draft*

Capital Repertory Company's predecessor, Lexington Conservatory Theatre (LCT) was founded in 1976 as a summer stock company in rural Greene County, New York. For five summers LCT presented a bold and daring variety of classic, lesser-known and new plays to adventuresome audiences, earning a reputation for excellence and innovativeness which soon spread throughout the Mid-Hudson Valley and into the Capital District.

As the company itself grew, from 15 to almost 100 members in five years, so did its audience base, and by the final season in 1980 it was determined that further growth was possible only in a more urban setting.

In March 1980 Capital Repertory Company made its debut in Albany. A three-performance run of George M. Cohan's delightful comedy, THE TAVERN, was staged at the Nelson A. Rockefeller Performing Arts Center (The Egg), the first performance being a benefit for Child Cancer Care at Albany Medical Center. The entire run was highly successful, convincing the company that the Capital District would welcome a resident, professional Equity (LORT D) theatre company into the mainstream of the area's rich cultural life.

At the close of LCT's final season in 1980, after producing 32 full productions and 36 new play readings, the company (heeded <sup>out</sup> the advice of Capital District leaders) and moved to Albany to prepare for its first season as Capital Repertory Company.

## CAPITAL REPERTORY COMPANY - THE FIRST SEASON

On December 3, 1980 Capital Rep opened its inaugural season

of three plays in a temporary home, Page Hall on the downtown SUNYA campus. Three full productions - JOE EGG, SORROWS OF STEPHEN and THE HOSTAGE - plus four new play readings were presented by March 8, 1981.

An artistic and critical success, the first season firmly established Capital Rep as the region's foremost professional Equity resident theatre. However, after five summers in Greene County and a winter season in Albany, the majority of the company's management resigned to pursue new careers, leaving the company without leadership.

#### CAPITAL REP FINDS NEW LEADERSHIP AND A NEW HOME

In August 1981 two longtime company members, Bruce Bouchard and Peter H. Clough, became the Producing Directors of Capital Rep. Among their immediate duties was the establishment of a new management structure, and in November Martha E. Gottlieb joined the management as General Manager, leaving a position with the Metropolitan Opera in New York.

Because of its size and location, the suitability of Page Hall as a permanent home was questioned, by Bouchard and Clough, and it was finally determined that the solution rested in the creation of a permanent, year round home in downtown Albany. An intensive search was immediately begun, and on November 12, 1981, at a well attended press conference, Albany Mayor Erastus Corning 2nd granted Capital Rep a five year, license of occupancy, utilities included, on the Grand Cash Market on North Pearl Street.

#### THE MARKET THEATRE IS CREATED

Little did Capital Rep's new leaders realize at the press conference and

lease signing , the kind of excitement and support the renovation of the former Grand Cash Market into the Market Theatre would generate. While it was understood from the beginning that the company would have to secure contributed materials and labor to effect the renovation from supermarket to 258-seat theatre, the final total exceeded the most liberal projections. Over 50 area businesses were generous with advice and materials, and over 50 members from nine <sup>building & trade</sup> unions contributed hundreds of hours of hands-on labor. In addition, scores of volunteers put in countless hours readying the theatre.

The value of the first phase of renovations, which <sup>was</sup> were completed in only 58 days, exceeded \$100,000.

The actual design of the intimate 258-seat theatre was overseen by Ted Mallin of Lary Opitz, who consulted with the architectural firm of Einhorn, Yaffee, Prescott & Krouner. <sup>Lary Opitz, Theatre Consultant, Skidmore College</sup> The comfortable seats were purchased through a grant from the Mohawk-Hudson Community Foundation.

#### THE 1981-82 SEASON: THE FIRST IN THE MARKET THEATRE

The 1981-82 season was officialy launched at a gala fundraiser February 27, 1982, at which Academy Award-winning actress Anne Baxter was the guest of honor. <sup>the nearly completed</sup> The fundraiser was held in newly renovated theatre, and approximately <sup>400</sup> 500 supporters were on hand to see the theatre and welcome the company to downtown Albany.

On March 8 the company's first season in the Market Theatre opened with a critically acclaimed production of Alan Ayckbourn's comedy, TABLE MANNERS. The four play season continued through May 23, with Tennessee Williams' classic A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE, the world premiere of Jeanne Darnell's FEATHERS and an original adaptation of Mary Shelley's FRANKENSTEIN by Oakley Hall III and Kathleen Masterson.



In addition, Capital Rep presented readings of five new plays.

Subscriptions for the 1981-82 season were up nearly 300% from the first Albany season, with a final tally of 1218 subscribers. Overall attendance rose dramatically to an average of 2900 per production, with each play running  $2\frac{1}{2}$  weeks.

The season was not only successful artistically and critically, but <sup>also financially with the fiscal year ending in a balanced budget</sup> for the first time in its history, Capital Rep ended the fiscal year with a balanced budget.

Among the highlights of the 1981-82 season was the receipt of Capital Rep's full request from the New York State Council on the Arts in the amount of \$30,000, and the corporate sponsorship of Albany Steel and Iron Supply Co., Inc., which made the striking set of FRANKENSTEIN possible.

On the final day of the season Capital Rep held a second fundraising cocktail party, with Betsy Palmer, star of stage, television and film, acting as the hostess.

#### RENOVATIONS: PHASE II

Because the first phase of renovations was completed in only 58 days, numerous ideas for improvements were delayed until the first season in the Market Theatre ended. The second phase of renovations is being overseen by Ted Mallin of the architectural firm of Einhorn, Yaffee, Prescott & Krouner. Lewis A. Swyer, president of L.A. Swyer, Co. Inc., is acting as construction consultant; and Richard Kositzka, of the International Union of Operating Engineers and Henry Landau, President/Business Manager of the Sheet Metal Local 106 <sup>Business Agent</sup> are coordinating the unions. Once again, the business community and building and trades unions have come forth to donate materials and labor.

<sup>underway</sup>  
Among the improvements <sup>is</sup> the removal of the large heating and ventilation unit which was located over the audience. It is being redesigned and reinstalled, with the end result being a much improved heating and ventilation system for the theatre, offices and concessions area.

In addition the upper concrete level of the stage area has been removed, allowing for greater flexibility in scenery design, permanent metal railings have been installed in the theatre, and a much needed concrete block wall is being constructed to separate the offices from the new concessions area. Renovations are also underway to improve the prop and costume shops, and the actors' dressing rooms, <sup>but the company badly needs makeup lights, various, costume racks, and carpentry tools to complete the effort</sup>

Capital Rep thanks all those who have participated in Phase II of the renovations, in particular Donald McKay of Tougher Industries, Ken Dagostino Jr. of Dagastino Block, Donald LedDuke of Colonie Burton Fisher of Masonry Corporation, Davis Acoustical, Bill Ritz of A. Ritz Corporation, <sup>Leona a Swyer, Ted Mullen</sup> and the business agents and membership of the nine participating building and trades unions.

#### CAPITAL REP HAS NEW BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION CALLED "CREW"

<sup>expanded to</sup>  
~~For the first time in its history,~~ Capital Repertory Company <sup>has greatly</sup> has a Board of Trustees. ~~A large, broad-based Board~~ with 26 members currently, <sup>its</sup> purpose is to provide expertise and direction which will generate the support necessary for the resident Equity company to achieve its goals. The officers elected are: Dr. Donald D. O'Dowd, President; Brian F. Mumford, Executive Vice President; Carolyn A. Anderson, James E. Mitchell and E. Richard Yulman, Vice Presidents; and Lewis H. Titterton, Treasurer.

Serving on the Executive Committee are the officers <sup>above</sup> plus Arthur Ardman, Lewis A. Swyer, and Sara Huntington Catlin.

Capital Repertory Extra Workers (CREW) has recently been formed to guide the volunteer activities on behalf of Capital Rep. Representing the tri-cities and surrounding communities, CREW members help in the daily operation, promotion and development of Capital Rep. Volunteers are currently needed on all CREW COMMITTEES: (chairpersons in parentheses)

Front of House (Phyllis Wilson)	Regional Groups (Pat Titterton and Jean Johnson)
Theatre Renovations (Pat O'Reilly)	Hospitality/Opening Nights (Jean Johnson and Jean Hoagland)
Office (Elaine Wieczorek)	Technical (Pat Titterton)
Recruitment (Bonnie Burdick)	

As a means of introducing potential CREW members to Capital Rep, two free guided tours/open houses are being held Thursday, October 14 at the Market Theatre. The first will run from 12:15 to 1:30 PM, for those on a lunch break, and the second will run 5:15 to 7 PM after office hours.

#### CAPITAL REP'S 1982-83 SEASON

The upcoming 1982-83 season has been expanded to 6 plays, each running an opening weekend plus three full weeks. The season is being funded in part by a \$40,000 grant from the New York State Council on the Arts. The grant represents a \$10,000 increase over the previous season.

Capital Rep is actively seeking corporate sponsors for the 1982-83 season. To date, the Mobil Foundation, Inc. has agreed to be the corporate sponsor of Capital Rep's opening production, SEA MARKS. *and Key Bank, N.Y., the corporate sponsor of the New Play Premiere* The Foundation's \$5,600 grant makes them the sponsor of the entire run of *a production* SEA MARKS, *a corporate sponsor* for which they will receive recognition in all publicity for the play, and other acknowledgements.

The 1982-83 season was welcomed in at The Repertory Reveille, a fundraising cocktail party, held September 19 at the Quackenbush House in Albany. New York State Council on the Arts Chairman Kitty Carlisle

Hart was the guest of honor.

THE 1982 - 83 SEASON - SUBSCRIBE NOW AND SAVE  
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